



THE HealthConnection



Stay Safe This Summer!

It's easy to get carried away by summertime activities, but there are three things that everyone should keep in mind during their fun-in-the-sun.

Mosquitoes & Ticks

Now that summer is here insects are out in full force, including some of our least favorites. Mosquitoes and ticks are more than just a nuisance, however; they often carry diseases such as West Nile, Lyme Disease, and Zika. The best protection against these pests is using a good insect repellent, avoiding areas with standing water, and staying out of tall grass or near wood piles without ample protection. If a tick does bite you, use tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Slowly, and applying an even amount of pressure, pull it without twisting or yanking it. Treat a mosquito bite by washing it with soap and water, avoid scratching it, and use anti-itch cream if needed. If you develop a fever, vomiting, or shortness of breath after a bite, call 911.

Heat Exhaustion/Stroke

The summer heat in Texas is known to be brutal, and the danger of heat exhaustion or heat stroke is not something to take lightly. Signs of heat exhaustion include pale skin, dizziness, headache, sweating, nausea, and rapid heart rate. If heat exhaustion isn't dealt with swiftly, it will progress to heat stroke. With heat stroke, sweating has stopped, confusion is present, skin turns red, and (in severe cases) can lead

to seizures. The cure for heat exhaustion or heat stroke is to cool off, but if there's no improvement it's best to call 911 for help. Some ways to keep cool involve drinking plenty of water, staying in the shade, and planning activities for the morning or evening when it's not as hot. Plus, always remember to wear sunscreen!

Drowning

Pools are a great way to keep cool and have fun, but they're also one of the most dangerous places for a young child. Drowning can happen very fast, and it almost never looks how it does in movies/tv. When drowning, it is impossible for a victim to call out for help since they can't get enough air to even breathe. They also don't wave for help because their instincts take over and they instead try to push themselves up out of the water. This action causes them to bob up and down in the water, but without help they will only be able to sustain themselves for about 20-60 seconds. It is a silent process that only trained lifeguards can spot. Remember: never leave your child alone, swim in areas with lifeguard supervision, and make sure the body of water matches your skill level.

If you keep this advice in mind, you're bound to have an awesome and safe summer!



Summer Exercise

We all want to get out and get moving in the summer, but the warmer summer weather can add some challenge to outdoor exercise. Here are some tips from the American Heart Association to help you accept the challenge, get active, and beat the heat (1).

- Know why it's dangerous to work out in the heat. Exercise already raises your core body temperature, and when you exercise out in the heat or where it's humid your body can't cool down and release heat as fast as it normally could. This increases your risk for dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke
- Stay hydrated throughout the day, and drink more water when you're in the sun or exercising. Make sure you drink before you start to feel thirsty.
- Protect yourself from the sun. Wear sunscreen, bug spray, sunglasses, and a hat or visor. When you pick you work out clothes, make sure you pick light colored, loose-fitting, and lightweight clothes.
- Allow yourself time to adapt to the warmer weather. It might take some time before you're able to exercise for very long or at your regular intensity, up to a couple weeks. To stay safe, especially while you're still adapting, take plenty of breaks in the shade or work out in the mornings or evenings when it's cooler and the sun is not as harsh.
- Check with your doctor before starting any workout routine.

One important tip is to make your work out fun. There are a lot of ways to get active outdoors and really take advantage of the season. Here are some fun summer activities to really get your heart pumping.

Walking

Walking regularly can help you get healthier. Taking a daily walk can boost your mood, reduce your risk of various diseases, and help you maintain a healthy weight. Depending on how intense your walk is, you can burn between 150-300 calories an hour (9, 10).

Gardening

Gardening can be a fun way to get active. While gardening and doing yardwork, you can burn 330 calories an hour. Along with physical health, gardening has an effect on your mental health as well. Being in the sun and doing work you can be proud of can improve your mood, boost your self-esteem, and can reduce stress (11).

Swimming

Swimming gets your whole body moving and keeps you cool. Swimming is a low-impact exercise, meaning it increases your heart rate while reducing stress on the rest of your body. This makes it safe for people with a variety of mobility issues, like injury, arthritis, or various disabilities. Not to mention, you can burn over 400 calories an hour after low pace swimming. Swimming is fun and kid-friendly too, just make sure that children are properly supervised and safe (8).

Rollerblading & Skateboarding

Speaking of fun and kid-friendly, rollerblading and skateboarding have been making a comeback! Rollerblading and skateboarding help improve your balance, coordination, endurance, and precision. These activities get your heart rate up in a unique and fun way. On average 30 minutes of steady rollerblading or skateboarding can burn between 200-400 calories (5, 7).



Hiking

Hiking is a great way to get in to nature, and like walking it has great health benefits. Depending on the intensity of the hike, you can burn between 200-400 calories while hiking. Walking a natural trail as opposed to flat ground can help work your core muscles, something that doesn't happen with regular walks. Additionally, hiking allows you to interact with nature and can help reduce your stress level (2, 3).

Biking

Biking is a fun, low-impact exercise. Most people already know how to ride a bike, making it easy to start biking for exercise. A 30 minute bike ride can burn around 300 calories, it works your core muscles, and can improve your balance. Biking has also been known to boost your mood by releasing endorphins and lowering stress levels (4, 6).

There are many fun ways to get active this summer, even in the heat. Just make sure you stay safe, stay hydrated, and stay within your limits.

References

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3. Corliss, J. (2018, November 13). *Health benefits of hiking: Raise your heart rate and your mood*. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/health-benefits-of-hiking-raise-your-heart-rate-and-your-mood-2016092810414>.
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Vaccines Protect You!

by Cari Waller, BSN, RN

Vaccines protect us from serious diseases such as measles, mumps, tetanus, and whooping cough (just to name a few). They do this by boosting the immune system to help the body fight off the invading virus or bacteria. Your immune system is an entire network within your body that works to defend your system from infection and illness. Your immune system is always at work for you!

Here's how an immune response works:

- Your immune system sounds the alarm, so your body knows there's an infection.
- It begins releasing antibodies to fight the illness or infection — think of antibodies as soldiers designed to fight off the specific infection you have. This process can take a few days.
- The antibodies work to attack, weaken, and destroy the infection.
- Afterwards, your immune system remembers this process. If the same infection or illness invades again, your body can recognize it and quickly send out the right antibodies, so you don't get sick.
- This protection against a certain disease is called immunity. In many cases, immunity lasts your whole life.

(Vaccines.gov)

Some people argue that it is safer to introduce these illnesses to the system naturally. Natural immunity happens after you get sick with a disease, but consequences of some of these illnesses can be serious and even deadly. A vaccine protects you from a disease or illness before it makes you sick. Vaccines will help your system fight the illness in a safer and more effective way.

The safety of vaccines has come into question in recent years but vaccines are held to very high safety standards by the FDA and CDC. Many independent studies have also been conducted proving that vaccines are both safe and effective.

When enough people in your community choose to vaccinate, we develop “herd immunity” or “community immunity”. This keeps the most vulnerable people in our population safe. Some people who are very young or immunocompromised are unable to be vaccinated but we can protect these individuals through “community immunity”. When as many people get vaccinated as possible, the spread infectious disease can be slowed or sometimes completely stopped within a community. Vaccines keep us safe and healthy and they keep our communities strong!

Vaccines Protect You. (2020). *Your best shot at good health*.

<https://www.vaccines.gov/basics/work/prevention>





Wash Your Hands!

A Friendly Reminder



Keeping your hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid spreading germs!



Cloth Face Masks

PROTECT OTHERS & SLOW THE SPREAD



A cloth face mask or covering is an added layer of protecting each other from the spread of COVID-19

How to Wear

- Wash the mask before use
- Use clean hands to put on the mask
- Have no gaps between your face & the mask
- Don't touch the mask while wearing it
- Remove mask from behind & wash your hands immediately

How to Care for Masks

- Wash dirty masks between use using hot water & a disinfectant like bleach
- Dry masks completely with high heat

A New Addition to the Health Department's Website!

A new website, designed by Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District (ATCPHD) and mySidewalk, gives Abilene-Taylor County residents insights into the social and economic drivers of health. At no time in recent history has attention to the root causes of health been so critical.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on Public Health; this comprehensive assessment takes the conversation beyond disease outcomes and explores the relationship between environments, behaviors, illness, and length of life.

This interactive story gives the community access to over 75 health data indicators and allows residents to stay informed about what is happening in their neighborhoods. The graphs and maps are available for public download, and all of the data is exportable in multiple formats.

To check out the ATCPHD mySidewalk website, go to <https://www.abilenetx.gov/health> and click on **Community Health Assessment** on the left blue column, or visit <https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/abilene-taylor-community-health-assessment/our-story>





Farmer's Market Week August 2nd—8th

Farmers markets have been a centerpiece of the community for hundreds of years. They are a place where local growers, local makers, local business, and the community can come together. Farmers markets are some of the most efficient ways to support your local community. By keeping your produce purchases local you get fresh, seasonal produce while directly supporting your local farmer and helps boost the local economy. Farmers markets are an easy way to directly bolster local growers and form a connection with the person growing your food. This week let's recognize the importance of the farmers markets, how they brighten the community, and how they support the farmer. (Alonzo & Sorgen, 2017)

The Abilene Farmers Market is located North 1st and Mesquite across from Frontier Texas. It's open from 7am to 12pm on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

References

Alonzo, P. by A. L., & Sorgen, J. R. (2017, February 21). *Farmers Markets as Community Centerpieces*. <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2013/08/05/farmers-markets-community-centerpieces>.



Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

In June, our WIC program was one of a few WIC clinics in Texas to offer the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program for our WIC clients. It has been about 10 years since we last participated in this grant program and we are excited to provide this opportunity for our WIC families. The Farmer's Market Nutrition Program expands our client's access to fresh fruits and vegetables while also supporting our local farmer's market. This program offers \$30 vouchers to pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding women, and to every child on the WIC program over the age of one.

The vouchers come in five \$6 increments that can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmer's market vendors in Abilene. These vouchers are in addition to the \$9 parents receive per child to use to buy fruits and vegetables at the store. When clients attend our class at the farmer's market, we teach them how to choose fresh fruits and vegetables and how to prepare them at home. We are excited to collaborate with Texas Department of Agriculture and our local farmers to provide this valuable resource to our clients.





Governor Abbott Establishes Statewide Face Covering Requirement

On July 2, 2020, Governor Abbott issued an order for all Texans to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial building or space open to the public, in an outdoor public space, or whenever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household.

Exceptions to this requirement include:

- Any person younger than 10 years of age
- Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering
- Any person while consuming food or drink or is seated at a restaurant to eat or drink
- Any person while the person is exercising outdoors and maintaining a safe distance from other people
- Any person while the person is driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household

A full list of exceptions and more information can be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-establishes-statewide-face-covering-requirement-issues-proclamation-to-limit-gatherings-2>

ATCPHD Service Update

By Appointment Only

The Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District offers the following services by appointment only:

- **COVID-Testing**
 - We do not conduct same day or asymptomatic testing
- **Immunizations & Shot Record Requests**
- **TB Testing**
- **Dental Services**
- **Refugee Services**
- **WIC**

To schedule an appointment, or for more information, please call 325-692-5600.

Walk-Ins

The following services are available on a walk-in basis:

- **Birth and Death Records**
 - Hours: 8am-4:30pm
 - Processing takes 24 business hours
- **Laboratory Services**
 - Hours: 9am-2pm, closed 12-1pm

MERCY Health Care

MERCY Healthcare Center is currently scheduling appointments for services. Please call 325-676-6634.

For All Locations

- Please stay home if you are feeling sick or if you have a sick family member at home
- Temperature checks are being conducted at the door

City of Abilene COVID-19 Information

Find resources & information about the City's response to COVID-19 at abilenetx.gov/covid19

CDC Resources

More Resources can be found at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Office of the Texas Governor

Governor Abbott's press releases with information on Open Texas and other Texas-wide ordinances can be found at gov.texas.gov/

Daily Numbers

Find graphics & more up to date information on our social media at facebook.com/abilenehealth.

About the Health Department

Our Mission: To protect and promote the health of all in Abilene and Taylor County through research, advocacy, and services that prevent disease and enhance the well-being of the community and the environment in which they live.

Our Vision: Partnering with the community, we will create an environment where all have the opportunity to improve their health and quality of life.

Our Values:

PROFESSIONALISM: We exemplify professionalism through respect, excellence, and teamwork.

Quality: We provide exceptional, valuable services for our community.

INTEGRITY: We serve with accountability and consistency to build community trust.

Innovation: We effectively use evidence-based strategies and best practices to advance public health.

COLLABORATION: We collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to promote community health and prevent disease.

STAY VIGILANT

YOU CAN HELP CONTROL TAYLOR COUNTY'S COVID-19 INFECTIONS



WEAR A FACE MASK IN PUBLIC & IN LARGE CROWDS



WORK TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING



WASH YOUR HANDS & DISINFECT SURFACES OFTEN

IF YOU FEEL SICK



QUARANTINE OR SELF-ISOLATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE



MONITOR YOUR SYMPTOMS



CONTACT YOUR HEALTH PROVIDER

RECEIVE THE LATEST CITY INFORMATION & UPDATES AT
ABILENETX.GOV/COVID19



Health District

850 North 6th Street
Abilene, Texas 79601
(325) 692-5600
Monday-Friday
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

MERCY Health Care Center

1902 Shelton Street
Abilene, Texas 79603
(325) 676-6634
Monday-Friday
8:00 am – 12:00 pm
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

abilenetx.gov/Health

Connect with us:



AbileneHealth
MercyHealthCareCenter



AbileneHealthDepartment



AbileneHealth